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= Harry Hurwitz - Chancellor

1919 (029)



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HENRY HURWITZ
Chancellor

INTERCOLLEGIATE MENORAH ASSOCIATION

For the Study and Advancement of Jewish Culture and Ideals

600 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK

February 28, 1919.

Sir Robert A. Falconer, President,
University of Toronto,
Toronto, Ont., Canada.

Dear Sir Robert:

It is a pleasant custom of the Menorah Society at Harvard University to hold an annual dinner to bring together students and graduates with members of the Faculty and guests from sister Universities. President Eliot, Professor Barrett Wendell, Dean Roscoe Pound, Professor Bliss Perry - but I need not name them all - have been among the Society's guests in past years.

This year the dinner is to take place Wednesday evening, May 7th (at one of the leading clubs or hotels in Boston); and we wish to extend to you a very hearty invitation to be our guest of honor. Not only would you represent for us a great sister University but also a great allied nation; and the occasion could be utilized, I am sure, to strengthen the many ties which now bind our Republic to your Dominion. And not least, we would be delighted to have you for your own sake, and as a discriminating friend of the Menorah movement, which I had the privilege of discussing with you in your office some weeks ago.

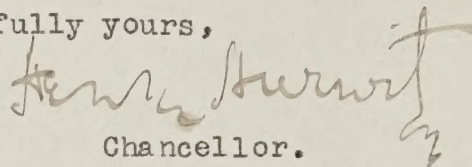
We trust that the date proposed is far enough ahead so that you can make the necessary arrangements to come, and we sincerely hope that you will be disposed to accept

-2-

this very cordial invitation. (Needless to say, all your expenses would be covered.)

With high regard, believe me

Faithfully yours,


Chancellor.

HH-RS

P.S. I am taking this opportunity to send you a copy of my "Memorandum on Menorah Education", which may be of interest to you.

352

FIRST MEMORANDUM ON MENORAH EDUCATION

Presented to the Menorah Educational Conference

(Dec. 28, 1918)

by Henry Hurwitz

Chancellor, Intercollegiate Menorah Association

Contents

I.	THE MENORAH SPIRIT.....p.	1
II.	THE LARGER MENORAH PROGRAM.....p.	2
	1. Extra-curricular.	
	2. Curricular.	
	3. Community or Extension.	
III.	EXTRA-CURRICULAR MENORAH EDUCATION.....p.	3
	e.g. (a) Lectures,	
	(b) Forums,	
	(c) Study Circles.	
IV.	TRAINING MENORAH LEADERS.....p.	8
V.	CURRICULAR MENORAH EDUCATION.....p.	10
VI.	MENORAH COUNCIL OF EDUCATION.....p.	12
VII.	BUDGET: MENORAH FOUNDATION.....p.	13

I. THE MENORAH SPIRIT

We have come to a point where we must systematize, enlarge, and render far more effective the work of the Menorah movement. This is the Menorah's Bar-Mitzvah year. No graver period than the present has ever challenged the coming of age of a Jewish educational organization.

The Menorah point of view is now pretty well established. It has weathered threats and decoys from various partisan quarters, ecclesiastical and political, and has come through stronger than ever in its essential academic, non-partisan character. Today the general conditions of ferment, dissolution, reconstruction, make our essential character all the more justified, nay, imperative. What we need above all today is Jewish education in the pure university spirit. "The university spirit" said President Wilson the other day, upon receiving his Doctor's degree from the University of Paris, "is intolerant of all things that put the human mind under restraint. It is intolerant of everything that seeks to retard the advancement of ideals, the acceptance of the truth, the purification of life; and every university man can ally himself with the forces of the present time with the feeling that now at last the spirit of truth, the spirit to which universities have devoted themselves, has prevailed and is triumphant."

This spirit of the university must prevail and become triumphant in Jewry. A happy augury of the new time is the founding of a modern Hebrew University on the Mount of Olives. But in our own country no less, Jewish higher education must be effectually promoted and be made to infuse our whole life. There must be a vindication of the classic Jewish tradition of learning, or at

least the spirit of learning, in broad commonalty spread. Furthermore, Jewish life and learning must be definitely woven into the skein of the American community and of western civilization at large. The Jewish Renaissance, started a century ago, must be itself renewed, reinvigorated, in order to bring about a genuine Jewish Reformation, a fundamental readjustment of the Jewish historical tradition with the intellectual and spiritual progress of our great era. It is in this way that the Menorah means "to advance Jewish Culture and Ideals."

II. THE LARGER MENORAH PROGRAM.

Given the point of view and the task of the Menorah, how shall we render our work as effective, as fruitful as possible?

The Menorah activities in the past represent as much educational effectiveness as was possible in the initial stages of our movement - in the period of organization and propaganda of our general principles and purposes; of spontaneous growth and experimental programs; of inadequate resources, both of men and of money, for original, creative, sustained educational endeavor. To be sure, beyond the planting of the Menorah organization in our universities (in itself a creative work), we have, according to all witnesses, at least one original achievement of the first water to our credit - The Menorah Journal. That may be offered as an earnest of what our spirit and organization can achieve, given adequate support from scholars, graduates, and the public at large. It is for such comprehensive support and cooperation that the Menorah now bids, upon "coming of age." And in pursuit of it the following is submitted in the first place to this Conference, outlining the plans for making Menorah Education an effective instrument towards the most

intelligent and spiritual Jewish life in America.

This larger Menorah Program may be divided into three parts.

First: The work of the Menorah Societies - of all extra-curricular activities in our colleges and universities - must be made as attractive and stimulating as possible to the students and faculties.

Second: The Jewish humanities, modern "Jewish Science", must be established in the college and university curricula, constituting an integral part of the liberal education offered by our higher institutions of learning.

Third: Literature, lectures, study, in the Menorah spirit, must be provided scientifically and attractively for graduates and other like-minded men and women, in the community at large, non-Jewish as well as Jewish. For the Jew needs not only to know himself, but to make himself properly known to his neighbor. (Perhaps this is the only way of undermining the "higher anti-Semitism.")

In this last direction our Journal has already proven an effective instrument. But with this whole third part, this statement will not concern itself. "Menorah Extension Education" is a subject to be handled by itself, in due course.

It is the first and second parts which will here be treated.

III. EXTRA-CURRICULAR MENORAH EDUCATION.

First, as to extra-curricular activities.

This statement will not consider the relations of the Menorah Societies to other Jewish student organizations, fraternities, etc. - except to point out that insofar as these are not opposed to the Menorah purposes, the Menorah is anxious to work in cooper-

ation with them in behalf of a common ideal of Jewish study and Jewish service.

Of the means adopted by the Menorah Societies to carry out their aims, only three will be here presented, namely: lectures, forums, and study circles, because they offer sufficient basis for the consideration of the whole problem of extra-curricular education.

(A) Lectures

Without degrogating from such value as disconnected, more or less improvised lectures have, and without involving their discontinuance, it is submitted as obvious that in order to be most effective lectures must be carefully thought out, documented (with outlines, references, questions, etc.), and attractively presented, whether singly or in series, by competent, trained lecturers. Assuming the proper administration of such lectures (a matter merely of organization), the steps to be taken are as follows:

(1) Engage the services of competent scholars and lecturers for a definite time - a week, month, year, or more - at an adequate compensation. By "adequate" is meant not the wage of unskilled labor but of professional service of a high sort. The knowledge and ability of such men are their capital, their means of decent livelihood; "sponging" upon them, as Jewish organizations do notoriously, is even in the short run demoralizing, both to the men and to the public. Moreover, a straightforward professional arrangement (and only that) makes possible consistently high, responsible work, involving adequate preparation, full accountability to the organization, etc.

(2) Train men, especially promising young men, to become Menorah lecturers and forum-leaders. Such men, having the right at-

(5)

titude and the right kind of personalities, can at the same time be fitted to serve for Menorah organization purposes and morale (maintenance of Menorah spirit and enthusiasm among the students). Thus field work could be combined with instruction.

(3) Prepare syllabi, lecture outlines, reference material - the whole literary and pedagogical paraphernalia - indispensably necessary to make Menorah lectures stimulating and fruitful even after the fragrance of the lecturer is departed.

(B) Forums

Forums are often considered as only specialized forms of lectures, but a forum of pure gem is a creature of altogether different inwards from a lecture. Not merely that the forum is much less formal than the lecture, that it is almost exclusively given over to current and more or less controversial matters (as of course lectures may be as well), but the element of give-and-take with the audience is of its essence. Hence, forums not only require leaders particularly trained in the art of Socratic midwifery but also an audience well-read and mentally on tiptoe. Two conditions are therefore indispensable for worth-while Menorah forums:

(1) Younger men (whether in years or in outlook), Menorah graduates, civic-minded professional and business men (perhaps better than weighty scholars) should be definitely trained, both as to subject matter and manner of address, in the art of forum-leading. The special art of handling crowds of Jewish students is a rather difficult one, and many a scholar and divine and layman has come to grief over it, either through lack of honest knowledge or through some shortage of fact or temper. The Menorah simply cannot afford to trust any man touch-and-go with forums. He must

first be put through an education.

(2) On the other hand, students have to be impressed with the amenities of intellectual give-and-take, one of the chief of which is the necessity of talking only from their own sure knowledge or from an honest desire to get at the knowledge or views of the leader. Mere heckling to worry the speaker, mere smartness or "bull" (in the not too elegant undergraduate phrase) should be as little countenanced in the pupils as in Gamaliel. If we can induce the right approach towards a Menorah forum on the part of the students, it should prove the most stimulating way of making them alive to the great Jewish issues of the day; of bringing them to understand the true significance of striding events; and above all of developing in them that open-mindedness, that unabashed curiosity to know and canvass not only the facts but all the viewpoints, without which they are merely puppets of party passions and party organizations.

How to bring about these results is a problem then not merely of training the leaders but of equipping the students. There we must bring in the arts of publicity, of arousing curiosity as to vital Jewish matters, of fomenting the strife of Hillel and Shammai in the young brood. In short, there must be cunningly contrived advertisements of subjects, and literature to vie in form and content with the popular prints of the day. It is no disgrace for us to take leaves out of the books of our successful vendors of more palpable but hardly more material goods. If this is an heretical point of view as applied to Jewish literature and education, the Menorah must be the first Jewish spiritual industry to put business and "pep" into this sacred (and hitherto rather dull) domain. We have to recognize the fact that for the mass of college

(7)

populations, as for the great majority beyond the college walls, clever (but honest) advertisement is the chief form of stimulus. Our forum-leaders must be in a sense drummers and promoters of our intellectual goods.

(C) Study Circles

Study Circles even more than forums depend ^{on} their sustained effectiveness as well as for their sheer appeal to begin with, upon the personality and ability of the leader. Sometimes students will stick to a circle because of their particular interest in the subject matter, but an uninspired and untrained leader will finally shoo off the most ardent. Next, literature - literature different in character from forum material but not less requiring the elements of outward attractiveness as well as substance - is indispensable: syllabi, outlines, leaflets of various kinds, source-books, texts, etc. - not forbidding as the material of regular courses often is. For it is to be remembered that Menorah Study Circles not only call for extra study hours, but offer no points or marks to the student, towards his degree. (Where Menorah study circles succeed in getting accepted for points by the authorities, a different situation is presented; see infra on curricular Menorah Education.)

Here as before it can only be repeated that in addition to providing the right literature and general guidance, the Menorah has to train leaders.

IV. TRAINING MENORAH LEADERS

Without further descanting upon the qualifications and the tasks of Menorah leaders, and without meaning to exhaust the various ways of bringing them forth, the following two proposals are submitted for practical consideration:

(1) Menorah Teaching Fellows

The first proposal has nothing novel about it, save in the special application of a general university practice. If we are earnest about Menorah education and mean to build it up, we can do no better than adopt some of the proven means of established branches of university learning, which, to the detriment of Jewish studies, have been drawing upon the best spirits and intellects of our Jewish youth. One thing is perfectly clear, that until the promoters of Jewish scholarship - as distinguished from the equipment of Jewish divines - are prepared to offer the same inducements (at least the same) as are offered to students and instructors of other, at present far more attractive fields of scholarship, Jewish scholarship will not invite the best striving minds among our youth. It is a perfectly simple situation. The prime inducements, not of scholarship as such but of special fields of scholarship, are position and remuneration. The following proposal is but the first modest step towards acclimating western educational methods in the hoary but almost deserted fields of Jewish scholarship in our universities.

To encourage students to fit themselves to become competent Menorah study circle leaders -- and later, assistants and instructors in the regular curriculum (see infra on Curricular Menorah Education); and in order to make it economically possible for men to

devote themselves to Jewish scholarship, either temporarily or with view of a career in Jewish scholarship (incidentally also enabling some deserving students to pursue the intellectual life) - let Menorah Teaching Fellowships be established in a number of the larger universities to begin with, say ten, carrying each a stipend of \$500 a year. Menorah Teaching Fellows to undertake to pursue Jewish studies of a definite character and amount, and also to conduct Menorah study circles and be responsible for certain other Menorah activities at his university. The details need not be gone into here; they are easily worked out. But this is important: Menorah Fellows doing sufficiently promising work, both in research and instruction, to be reappointed for another one-year or a two-year term, and then, if their work on all counts is sufficiently promising and satisfactory, to be recommended for and provided with instructorships or professorships in Menorah Chairs. The implications of this last provision will be brought out presently.

(2) Menorah Summer School

In the second practical proposal there is again nothing novel, except possibly in applying a good old Jewish institution, perhaps as old as Jochanan ben Zakkai, to American conditions of the present day. It is proposed as one means of developing Menorah lecturers, forum leaders, study circle leaders, and also Teaching Fellows, and in due time Menorah instructors and professors.

Let the summer vacations be taken advantage of by bringing together scholars, both Jewish and non-Jewish, understanding and expressing the Menorah point of view, graduate students and upper-classmen who have evinced a serious interest in Jewish learning or

have carried on Menorah administration creditably (a not ignoble spur to Menorah officers). Let such a company, carefully selected, live together for the period of two or three months, in a democratic kind of brotherhood in some agreeable country spot, where study, discussion, and recreational life in the open might be combined. (You recall the psalmist's ideal!) Those students passing certain prescribed tests at the end of the season to be awarded appropriate credits, which should count in the appointment of Menorah Teaching Fellows and the incumbents of Menorah Chairs.

V. CURRICULAR MENORAH EDUCATION

From what has been presented already, as well as from the logic of the general position, it must be clear that the systematizing of Menorah Education necessarily involves the larger and larger inclusion of Jewish studies -- Jewish history, literature, modern Jewish life and thought, treated in the purely university spirit, sans theological bias -- in the curricula of our colleges and universities. That is the splendid fulfilment of the Menorah program, not rendering Menorah Societies less needful but rather more so, and even more honored and more attractive to the general student bodies. Compare, for example, the relations of the Cercle Francais to the regular courses in French history and culture. Already, as at Harvard, a Menorah beginning in the curriculum has been made. The developments in this direction will mean the progressive naturalization of the Jewish intellectual and spiritual life in the western world. What it will mean for the dignity and productiveness of the modern emancipated Jewish spirit may only be divined. For one thing, it will provide a noble channel for young

Jewish spirits who with all their intellect and ardor have found hitherto no acceptable opportunity to serve the Jewish cause and have consequently given their minds to other disciplines and devotions -- to the infinite loss of Jewish life.

Though it is a great theme and a great dream -- but a dream that can easily be made to come true -- only a brief statement is here necessary. The first point is: It may be safely assumed that just as the university authorities have welcomed the coming of the Menorah Societies, so they will heartily welcome the Menorah enrichment of their curriculum. Of this, evidence is already available. It is but necessary to demonstrate the seriousness and sincerity of the program and our capacity to carry it out in a manner conformable to the highest university standards. For the rest, the program need wait only upon the appearance of glittering gold.

It is pertinent however at the present time to indicate the three ways in which curricular Menorah education may be planted. First, by providing satisfactory pedagogical material on vital Jewish aspects (now quite neglected) of general courses in history, literature, sociology, etc. Second, by instituting whole courses in Jewish history, literature, etc. Third, by establishing Menorah Chairs wholly given to the investigation and teaching of the Jewish humanities.

VI. MENORAH COUNCIL OF EDUCATION

It needs no argument that to develop such a program, both extra-curricular and curricular, as has been presented; to supervise and stimulate and administer the proposed Menorah Education -- a competent, permanent, democratic body of educators and educational administrators is called for. Hence it is proposed to organize a Menorah Council of Education at this Conference, that shall constitute in effect, together with the Intercollegiate Menorah Association representing the students, a kind of Menorah University. Not only should such a Council have charge of Jewish educational activities in all our higher institutions of learning (except the specifically Jewish ones), but also of Menorah extension education in the community at large. It is suggested that membership in the Council should be open to all college and university instructors and administrators (non-Jewish as well as Jewish, of course) and other educators and competent persons, e.g. graduates and other public-spirited men, especially approved -- all sympathizing with the Menorah ideal. The appointment of Menorah Teaching Fellows and incumbents of Menorah Chairs, the conduct of such enterprises as the suggested Menorah Summer School, would naturally be in its charge. Functioning with the Council would be the Intercollegiate Menorah Association, representing the students, and the Federation of Graduate Menorah Societies (to be formed) representing the graduates and like-minded men and women in the community. So that Menorah Education shall be in the hands of those -- educators, students, graduates -- who are the active agents and beneficiaries of the whole comprehensive undertaking.

VII. BUDGET: MENORAH FOUNDATION

In order to promote this scheme of Menorah Education a considerable budget must be called for. The sum of \$100,000 is necessary for an adequate start. And little time should be lost in the endeavor to establish a Menorah Foundation with an endowment of \$1,000,000.

N O T E

In accordance with the proposal in this Memorandum, the Conference formed itself into a permanent body with the following Officers and Executive Committee:

Chairman: Mr. Hurwitz

Vice-Chairman: Capt. Nathan Isaacs (lately Acting Dean of University of Cincinnati Law School)

Secretary: Mr. A. S. Oko, Librarian, Hebrew Union College

Dr. A. M. Dushkin, Bureau of Jewish Education, New York

Prof. Israel Friedlaender, Jewish Theological Seminary

Prof. Richard Gottheil, Columbia University

Dr. I. L. Kandel, Teachers' College and Carnegie Foundation

Prof. Simon Litman, University of Illinois

Prof. Max L. Margolis, Dropsie College

Dr. Max Radin, Columbia University

Dr. H. A. Wolfson, Harvard University